



SE US news
 HD **First Thing: Texas abortion ban temporarily blocked**

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US federal judge rules law violates right to abortion in first legal challenge to Senate Bill 8. Plus, Alaska hospitals ration care Don't already get First Thing in your inbox? Sign up here

Good morning.

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Texas's near-total [abortion ban has been temporarily blocked](#) after a US federal judge ruled that it violated the constitutional right to abortion, in the first legal challenge to Senate Bill 8.

Brought by the Biden administration, the lawsuit will prevent Texas from enforcing SB8 while litigation over its legality continues. However, with state officials likely to seek a rapid reversal of the ruling, many doctors may refuse to carry out abortions for fear of being sued.

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Is Texas's law unique? In some ways, yes. While other states have passed similar laws, SB8 delegates enforcement to private citizens, not prosecutors.

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What has SB8's effect been? Planned Parenthood said the number of patients at its Texas clinics fell by nearly 80% in the two weeks after the law took effect.

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What did the federal judge say? "Women have been unlawfully prevented from exercising control over their lives in ways that are protected by the constitution," Robert Pitman wrote.

Ethiopia in 'immense humanitarian crisis'

Ethiopia is facing an ["immense humanitarian crisis"](#), United Nations secretary general António Guterres has warned as conflict and famine-like conditions plague the country's north.

Guterres called for Addis Ababa to grant "unhindered" aid access following the "unprecedented" expulsion of [seven UN officials](#), most of them humanitarian workers, last week. One ambassador warned the move could set a dangerous precedent for conflicts in Myanmar and Afghanistan.

Ethiopia has been engulfed in fighting between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) since last year.

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How bad are conditions? The conflict has driven 400,000 people into famine-like conditions, while up to 7 million people need food assistance in regions such as Tigray, Amhara and Afar, according to the UN.

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Meanwhile, whistleblower Frances Haugen accused Facebook of ["literally fanning ethnic violence"](#) in countries including Ethiopia because it is not properly monitoring its service outside the US.

Alaska hospitals ration care

Hospitals in Alaska, the state with the highest Covid case rate, have turned to emergency measures to [allow the rationing of healthcare](#) as doctors scramble to find beds for patients.

As medical centres implement crisis care standards and pause elective procedures, doctors are spending their shifts searching for beds in other states for their patients. One doctor in Anchorage described having to choose between several patients vying for a single intensive care bed, resulting in the death of a patient.

Republican governor Mike Dunleavy has refused to implement mask or vaccine mandates, leaving such measures up to local government.

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How high are cases? One in 84 people in Alaska was diagnosed with Covid-19 in the last week of September, and the whole state is on high alert for significant coronavirus spread.

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What about vaccination rates? Less than two-thirds of eligible Alaskans are fully vaccinated.

In other news...

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At least 20 people have been killed in a 5.7 magnitude earthquake in southern Pakistan which [injured more than 200](#), government officials said. The quake struck Balochistan at 3am.

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Rio de Janeiro police have found a Nazi trove estimated to be worth €3m at the [home of a Brazilian man suspected](#) of raping a minor. The haul includes weapons, images of Adolf Hitler and Nazi uniforms.

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Benito Mussolini's granddaughter has won the highest number of votes in [elections for Rome's city council](#). Rachele Mussolini, who won over 8,200 votes, belongs to the far-right party Brothers of Italy.

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Pharrell Williams has cancelled his Something in the Water festival in Virginia Beach after [police fatally shot his cousin](#) there earlier this year.

Stat of the day: 57% of child psychiatrists seeing patients distressed about climate crisis

More than [half \(57%\) of child psychiatrists in England](#) are seeing children and young people distressed by the climate emergency, as experts warn that eco-anxiety is growing among under-25s. Although not yet considered a diagnosable condition, levels of "chronic fear of environmental doom" are likely to be underestimated, while international research has found anxiety is "profoundly affecting huge numbers of young people around the world".

Don't miss this: Torrey Peters on Detransition, Baby

When Torrey Peters set out to write *Detransition, Baby* in 2018, “the trans debate” was far from her mind. “I was just thinking about what was going to be funny for my friends and what was pertinent to our lives,” she says. Writer and trans dad [Freddy McConnell talks to Peters](#) about having kids while LGBTQ+, being longlisted for the Women’s prize, and “the Sex and the City problem”.

Climate check: UK butterfly numbers at record low

The UK has recorded its lowest ever number of butterflies in an annual survey of the insects since the count began 12 years ago, leading conservationists to call for urgent action. In addition to being a vital part of the food chain, butterflies are considered [significant indicators of environmental health](#). Volunteers participating in the Big Butterfly Count recorded numbers 14% lower than last year.

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Last Thing: Fat Bear Week 2021

In a win for local democracy, thousands of bear enthusiasts went to the polls earlier this week to cast their vote for Alaska’s fattest bear. Otis, who has won the contest three times previously, took the top prize in the annual competition, which compares the pre-hibernation weight gain of the Katmai national park residents. Check out the before-and-after pics – complete with sliders – [here](#).

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